

VEHICLE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Cross-reference to Related Applications

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[01] This application is a continuation of U.S. Application No. 09/136,868, filed August 19, 1998, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/056,150, filed August 19, 1997.

*a division of 10/246,967 now Patent No 6,628,233
now PAT. NO 6,640,694*

Background

[02] This invention relates to an information system for motor vehicles.

[03] Vehicle information systems have been developed that provide various types of information to operators of those vehicles. In particular, navigation systems have been developed. One type of navigation system, an autonomous navigation system, uses an on-board map, typically stored on a removable medium such as a compact optical disk (e.g., CD-ROM). The navigation system uses the on-board map to plan a route from a starting point to a destination, which is specified by the operator of the vehicle. Updating an autonomous system's map, for example to add or correct information, typically involves replacing the removable medium.

[04] In some navigation systems the operator inputs the desired destination (and the current location, if required by the system) by entering a spelling of the destination. Some systems also allow an operator to select from a stored list of "points of interest," such as a list of gas stations or restaurants. Once the operator inputs the destination, the system plans a route along the road network to the destination. The route is typically planned to provide a shortest distance or to try to provide the shortest travel time. Once the route is planned, the operator is guided by the system along the route.

[05] Various approaches to route guidance have been used. A particularly simple approach is to provide the operator with a